Public Health Workforce & Infrastructure

NCSL State Public Health Symposium

June 23, 2023

Lindsey Myers, MPH
Vice President, Public Health
Workforce and Infrastructure

The **public health workforce** plays an essential role in securing the vital conditions for optimal health and well-being for all to thrive. A *diverse, engaged, well-resourced, well-trained* public health workforce can meet the demands of public health today and prepare for the needs of tomorrow.

ASTHO Profile Survey

The ASTHO Profile of State and Territorial Public Health is a **longitudinal survey** that began in 2007 and is **fielded every three years** to health agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 8 island jurisdictions **with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and CDC**. ASTHO's Profile survey is the most comprehensive source of data on state and territorial health agencies, and **captures data on these core infrastructure areas:**
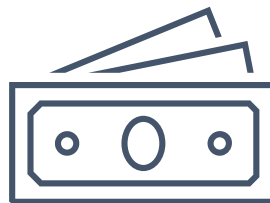
Activities

Structure and Governance
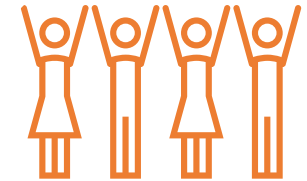
Workforce

Finance and Expenditures

Quality Improvement
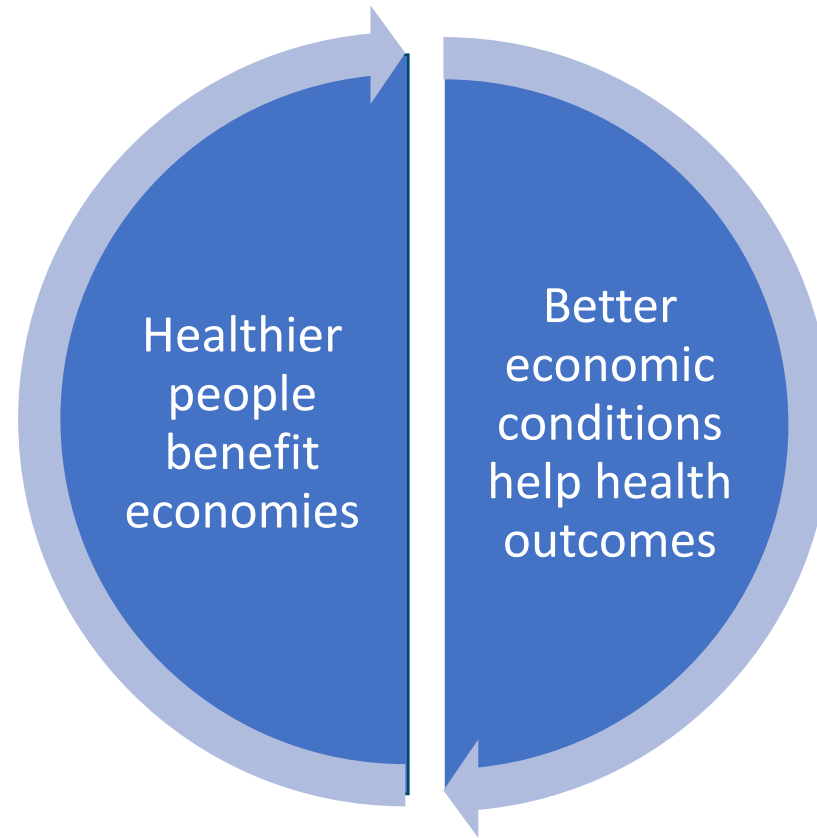
Informatics

Health Equity

Governance Classification subsection added in 2022 (but will not likely be in 2025)
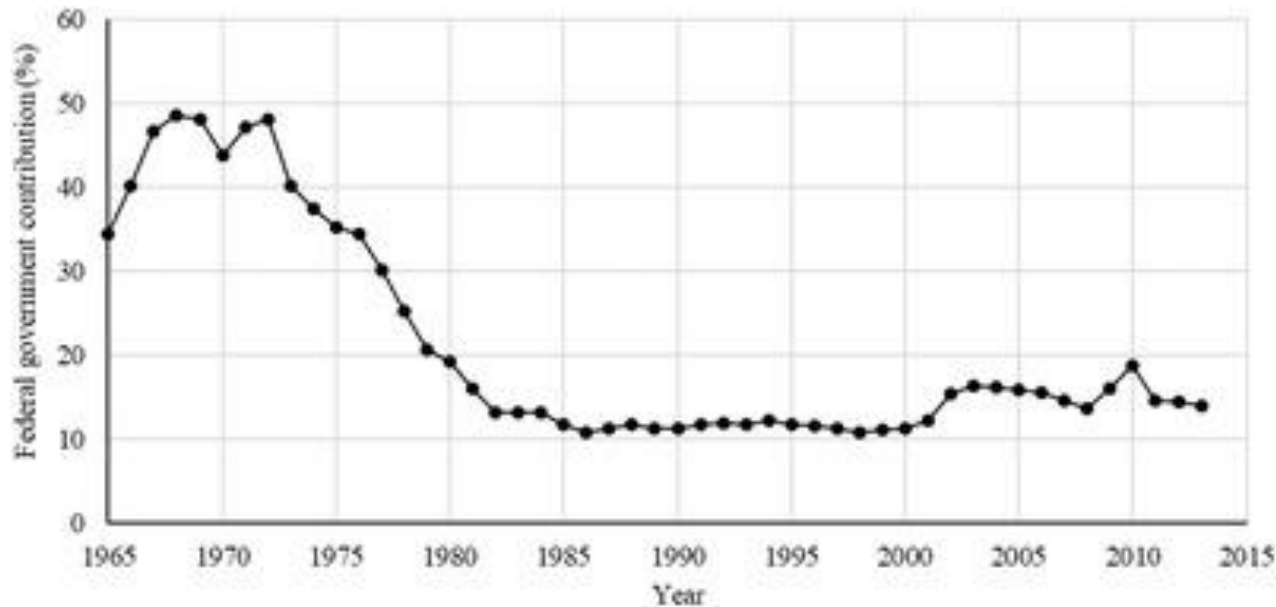
New sections added in 2022

Public Health Funding has Declined as the Population has Increased

As population increased from 2010 to 2018, **overall expenditures** by public health agencies **declined by 10.3% (a difference in billions)**

Source: New Data on State Health Agencies Shows Shrinking Workforce and Decreased Funding Leading Up to the COVID-19 Pandemic | ASTHO

Over 7 years prior to COVID-19, state health departments alone lost over 10,000 positions

The ratio of public health workforce to US population has decreased drastically

Number of Public Health Workers (per 100,000 People)

220

158

1980 |||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||| 2000

Year

astho™

The Problem

Nearly half of state and local public health employees left their organizations from 2017 to 2021, creating **a critical lack of skills and experience** across the nation.

WHO LEFT

46%
of state and local **public health employees**
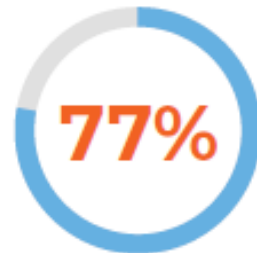
77%
of employees with **<5 years' experience** at their organizations
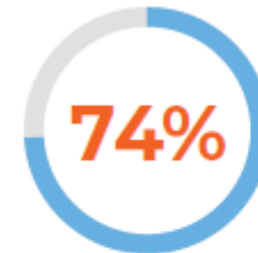
74%
of employees **under age 35**

PH WINS
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE
INTERESTS AND NEEDS SURVEY

de Beaumont
BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

astho™

The Workforce is Experiencing Burnout

56 % of the public health workforce reported at least one symptom of PTSD

25% of the public health workforce are considering leaving their position

PH WINS
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE
INTERESTS AND NEEDS SURVEY

de Beaumont
BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

astho

Why it matters

In addition to eroding services, this loss of public health experience and institutional knowledge puts communities at significant **risk for infectious diseases and other health crises.**

SERVICES AT RISK

- Chronic disease
- Maternal and child health
- Injury prevention
- Environmental health

IF TRENDS CONTINUE

nearly 130,000 staff will have left their jobs by 2025

This is on top of an **existing shortage** of **80,000 staff** needed to provide basic, necessary, public health services.

Public Health Workforce Challenges

Overall decline in quantity and quality of applications

Lack ability to offer competitive pay and hiring incentives such as loan repayment

Limitations due to outdated HR systems, rules, and procedures

Working within union/civil service environment

Existing policies that prevent attracting a diverse and younger workforce

astho ™

Public Health Infrastructure Challenges

"BOOM AND BUST" FUNDING

DISEASE-SPECIFIC FUNDING

LARGE PORTION OF BUDGET COMES FROM GRANTS
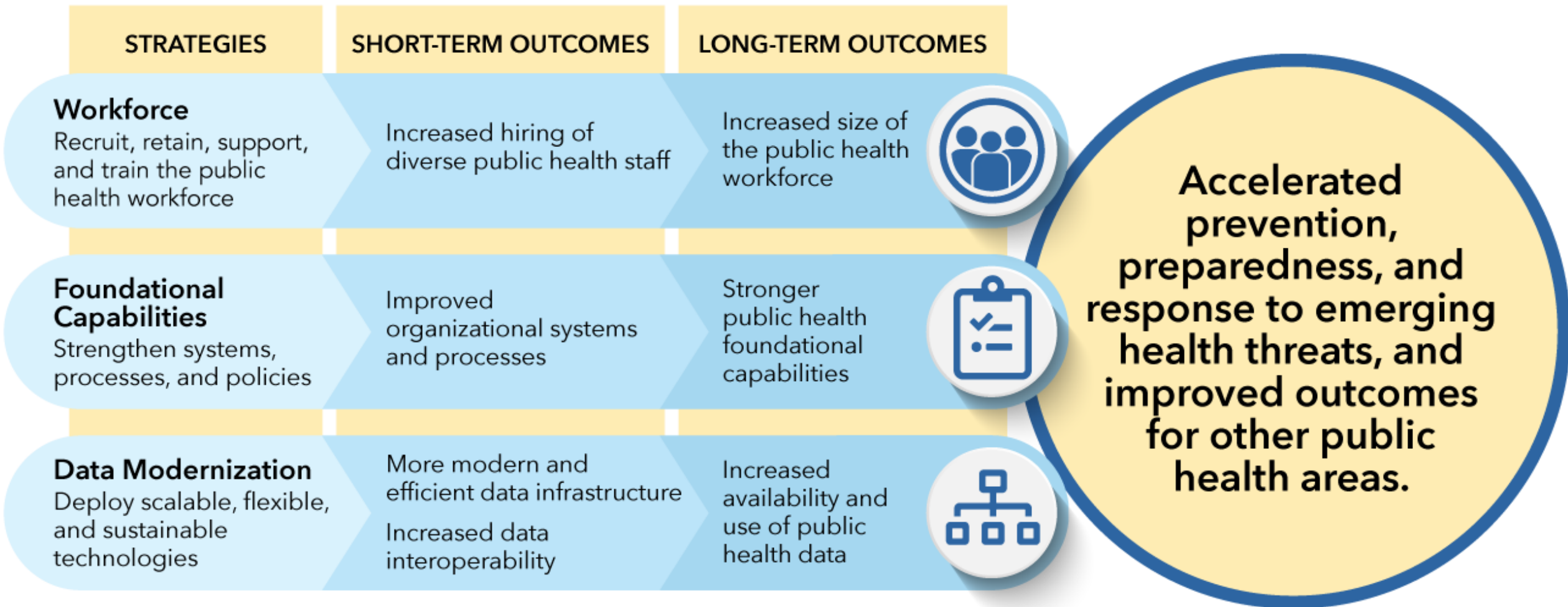
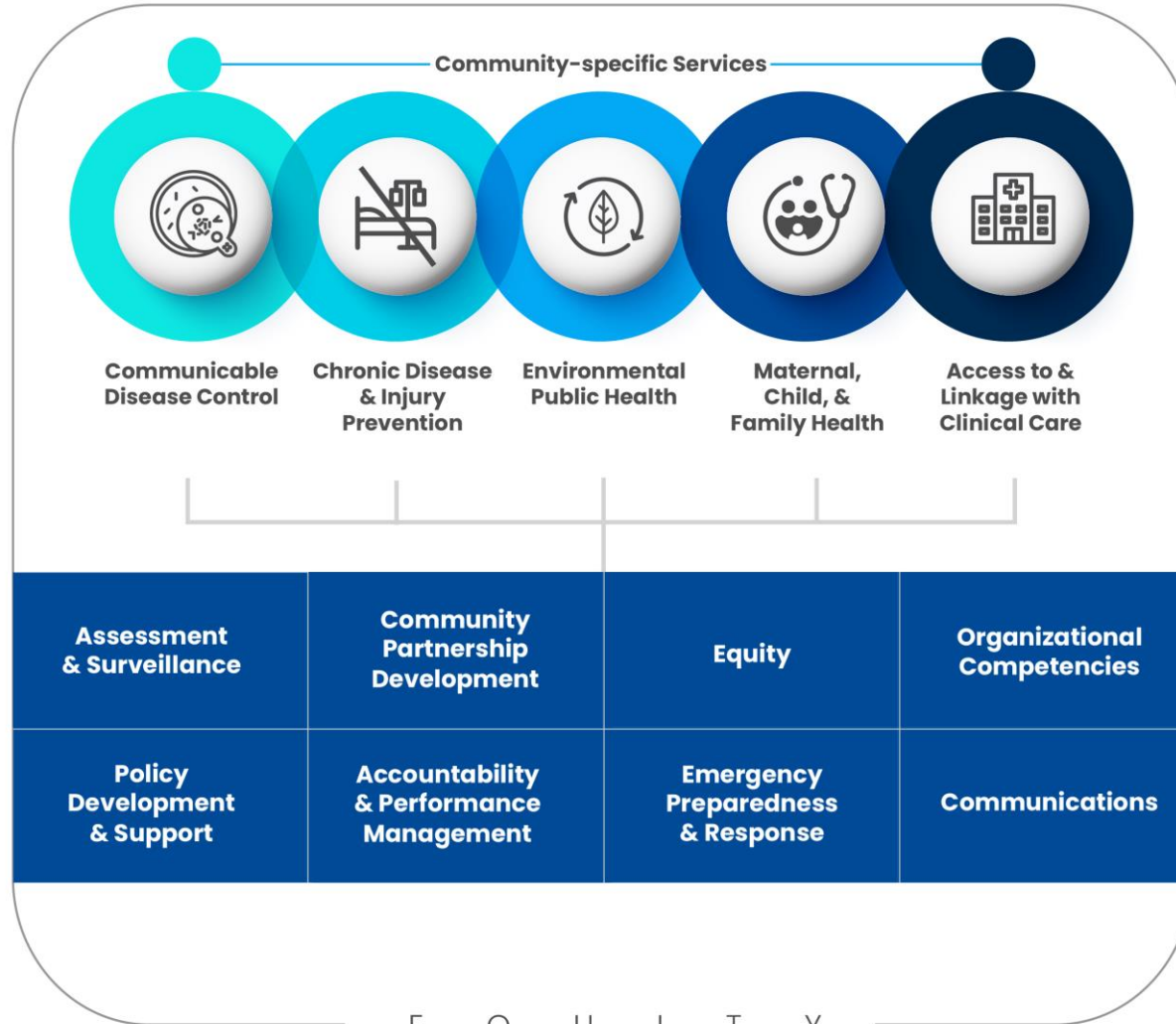**ANTIQUATED TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS**

INSUFFICIENT LAB CAPACITY

UNDER-RESOURCED WORKFORCE

Public Health Infrastructure Grant (CDC)

STRATEGIES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
Workforce Recruit, retain, support, and train the public health workforce	Increased hiring of diverse public health staff	Increased size of the public health workforce
Foundational Capabilities Strengthen systems, processes, and policies	Improved organizational systems and processes	Stronger public health foundational capabilities
Data Modernization Deploy scalable, flexible, and sustainable technologies	More modern and efficient data infrastructure Increased data interoperability	Increased availability and use of public health data

Accelerated prevention, preparedness, and response to emerging health threats, and improved outcomes for other public health areas.

astho™

Foundational Public Health Services

Community-specific Services

Foundational Areas

- Communicable Disease Control
- Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention
- Environmental Public Health
- Maternal, Child, & Family Health
- Access to & Linkage with Clinical Care

Foundational Capabilities

Assessment & Surveillance	Community Partnership Development	Equity	Organizational Competencies
Policy Development & Support	Accountability & Performance Management	Emergency Preparedness & Response	Communications

EQUITY

PHAB
Advancing public health performance

phnci

February 2022

astho™

Public Health Infrastructure Grant National Technical Assistance Partners

ASTHO's Capacity Building Approach

Workforce & Leadership Development

- Peer to Peer Connection
- Improved Workforce Wellbeing & Retention
- Improved Pipelines, Recruitment and Hiring Mechanisms
- Supervisory & Leadership Skill Building

Foundational Capabilities

- Improved Knowledge of Foundational Capabilities
- Strengthened Financial & Administrative Processes
- Improved Planning and Systems

Data Moderinization

- Peer to Peer Connection
- Improved Understanding & Implementation Approaches to Data & Data Systems
- Infrastructure Sustainability

Legislative Trends

Efforts to sustain funding

- Ex: NV, IN, MD

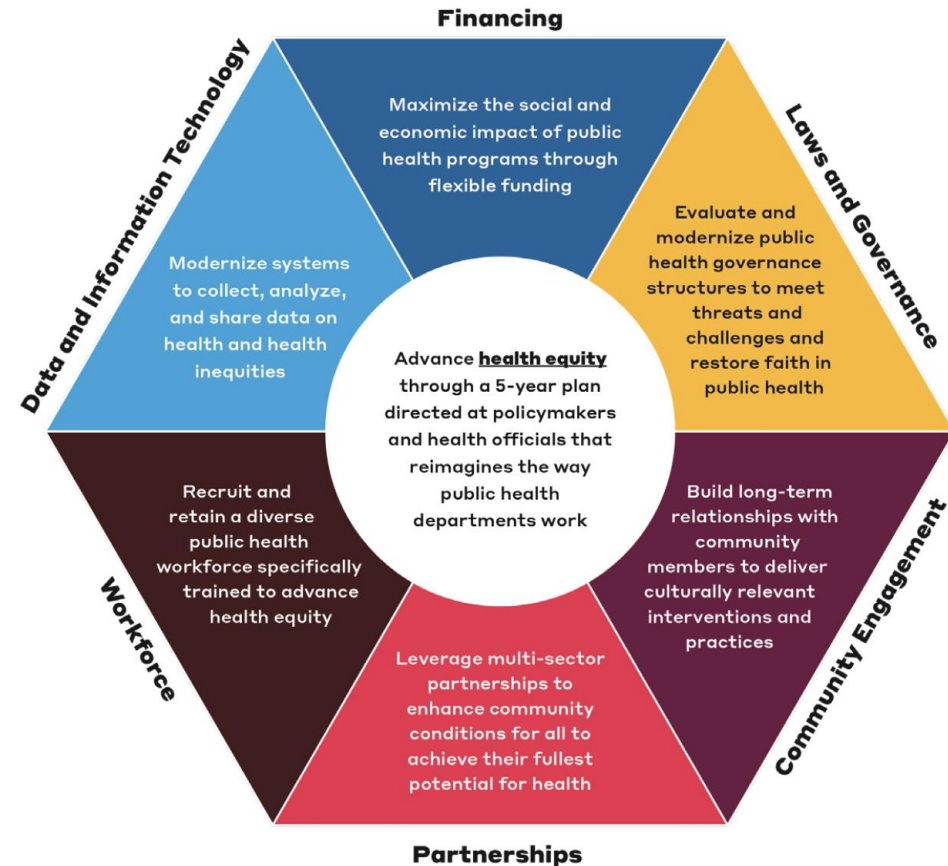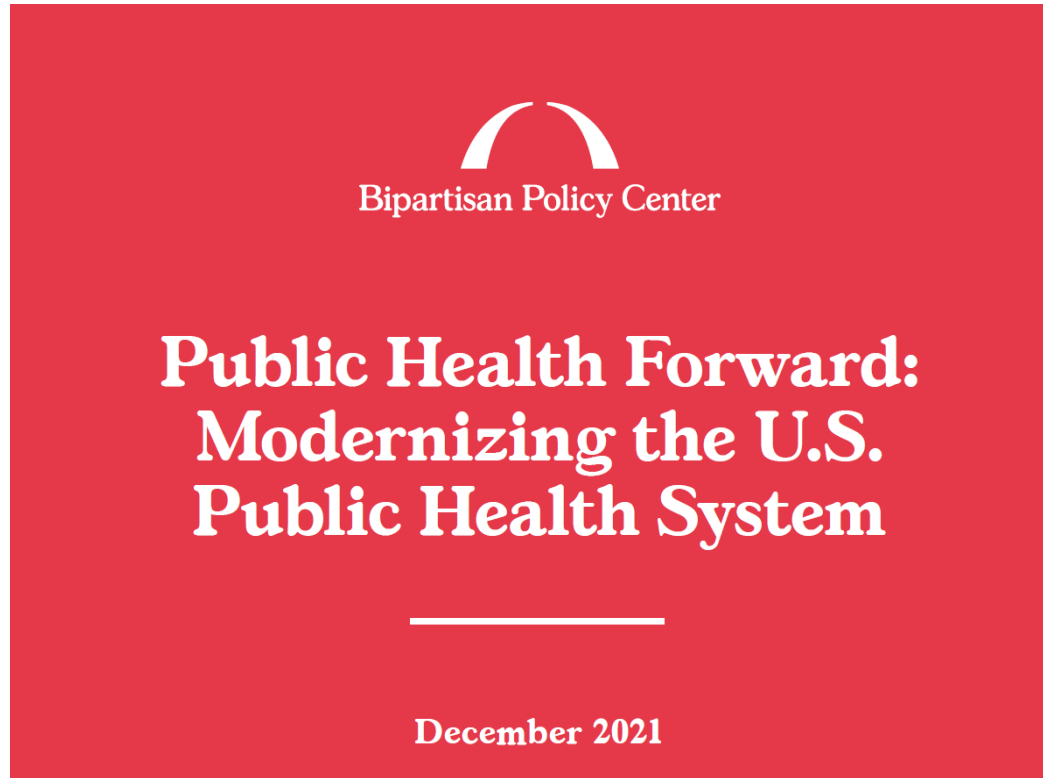**Increasing public health workforce capacity**

- Ex: CA, TN

Expanding community partnerships

- Ex: CO

Data sharing

- Ex: MD, OK

Recommended Actions for Policymakers

Bipartisan Policy Center

Public Health Forward: Modernizing the U.S. Public Health System

December 2021

Financing — Maximize the social and economic impact of public health programs through flexible funding

Laws and Governance — Evaluate and modernize public health governance structures to meet threats and challenges and restore faith in public health

Community Engagement — Build long-term relationships with community members to deliver culturally relevant interventions and practices

Partnerships — Leverage multi-sector partnerships to enhance community conditions for all to achieve their fullest potential for health

Workforce — Recruit and retain a diverse public health workforce specifically trained to advance health equity

Data and Information Technology — Modernize systems to collect, analyze, and share data on health and health inequities

Advance **health equity** through a 5-year plan directed at policymakers and health officials that reimagines the way public health departments work

astho ™

https://bipartisan/policy.org/report/public-health-forward/

Recommended Actions for Policymakers

- **Financing**
  - Provide flexible funding and maximize existing resources to support public health services and capabilities.
  - Support public health system evaluations and study commissions.
- **Data**
  - Invest in modern, efficient, and interoperable information technology.
  - Invest in data sharing between public health and health care.
- **Workforce**
  - Support statewide public health workforce needs assessments.
  - Modernize civil service requirements and institute competitive pay structures.

Recommended Actions for Policymakers

- **Governance**
  - Conduct bipartisan, comprehensive review of existing policies and revise as needed.
- **Partnerships**
  - Incentivize partnerships between public health departments and other sectors.
  - Establish a body to monitor, assess, and influence implications for health in all policies.
- **Community Engagement**
  - Allocate funds to support the capacity building of community-based organizations.
  - Allocate funds to public health for community collaboration.

Other Ideas

- Build relationships with state and local health departments in your jurisdiction

- Reassess professional licensing requirements to retain and expand the public health workforce.

- Create mental and behavioral health supports for public health workers and organizations.

- Protect public officials, including public health workers, from threats, intimidation, and harassment.

- Explore PH WINS and ASTHO Profile Dashboards to learn more about the public health infrastructure in your state.

https://www.phwins.org

https://www.astho.org/profile